

**Search and Rescue
Emergency Support Function #9
Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan**

LEAD AGENCY: Division of Emergency Management; Colorado Search & Rescue Board (CSRB) (through agreement)

SUPPORTING AGENCIES: Department of Local Affairs, Department of Military and Veteran Affairs, Civil Air Patrol (CAP), and Department of Public Safety.

I. PURPOSE

This annex defines procedures for the employment, coordination and utilization of available resources and personnel in locating and rescuing lost and/or injured persons. This annex does not include urban search-and-rescue (US&R) as defined in ESF 9 of the National Response Plan. US&R involves the location, rescue (extrication), and initial medical stabilization of victims trapped in confined spaces. Structural collapse is most often the cause of victims being trapped, but victims may also be trapped in transportation accidents, mines, and collapsed trenches. For this function see ESF #4.

II. SCOPE

Search and rescue responsibility is granted by statute to the Sheriff of each county in Colorado. The State can assist the Sheriff with the use of State resources or by coordination, through CSRB, of other local resources. SAR activities may include:

- A. Searches and rescues in the mountains or plains for lost, missing or endangered persons.
- B. Dragging of or underwater searches in lakes, ponds, or rivers.
- C. Searching for downed or missing aircraft

III. SITUATION

- | A. People may become lost, trapped or otherwise isolated; government must be prepared to seek out, locate, and rescue such persons.
- | B. Missing persons may be injured or deceased. Search and rescue activities must be prepared to provide aid to injured persons.
- | C. The Colorado Search and Rescue Fund can provide

reimbursements to local governments for some expenses incurred on some missions.

- D. The State of Colorado has signed an agreement with the Air Force SAR Coordinator for the Inland Region in support of the National Search and Rescue Plan. This agreement provides County Sheriffs with the ability to contact Air Force air assets directly or via DEM or CSRB. The Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs will provide resource support via this agreement. Military and Veterans Affairs may also support SAR operations when directed by the Governor.
- E. Colorado has signed an agreement with the Colorado Wing Civil Air Patrol, Colorado Search and Rescue Board, Inc., County Sheriffs of Colorado and the Commander Air Force Rescue Coordination Center to further delineate the operations procedures pursuant to the search and rescue agreement referenced at item III.D.above.

IV. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- A. A missing or lost person is always considered to be alive and in need of rescue until such time that a person of authority (such as the Sheriff) concludes that there is no chance of survival or support, including rescue and is no longer required.
- B. Many counties and some cities support a local rescue organization. Local rescue organizations may specialize in one form of rescue and may need assistance to handle some situations.
- C. The safety of the rescue personnel is foremost in any operation.
- D. Inclement weather may be a factor in any search and rescue activity - restricting the types of resources to be used, the length of time they can be used and even the locations to be searched.
- E. Under some circumstances, the incident scene is also a crime scene and care must be taken to protect evidence.

V. **CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

- A. The CSRB, through its agreement with DEM, will provide assistance coordinating search and rescue efforts.
- B. All state assistance will be provided to the local Sheriff and will operate under the appropriate incident commander.

- C. The CSRB may coordinate additional resources if requested by the County Sheriff.

VI. **ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The County Sheriff is responsible for coordination of search and rescue missions within their county. All SAR operations will be managed under the Incident Command System.
- B. The Civil Air Patrol is responsible for conducting and coordinating all lost, missing and overdue aircraft searches in cooperation with the County Sheriff in whose jurisdictions such searches may take place.

The Civil Air Patrol is responsible for Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) searches. Since the non-distress (false alarm) rate of ELTs is nearly 99%, the Civil Air Patrol will coordinate with the County Sheriff on searches that may be a distress situation.
- C. The Department of Local Affairs will manage the Colorado Search and Rescue Fund.
- D. CSRB is responsible for maintaining contact lists for SAR organizations throughout the State.
- E. The Department of Public Safety will provide transportation support.